A Publication for Employees of the Missouri Department of Transportation

Connections

National Work Zone

April 2012

New Signs Ask Motorists to Rate Our Work Zones

by Holly Dentner

Strategically placed signs give advance notice to motorists that they will soon approach an active work zone. In fact, every aspect of a highway work zone, from the signs to the distance between the channelizers, is carefully orchestrated to make it as safe as possible for employees and motorists.

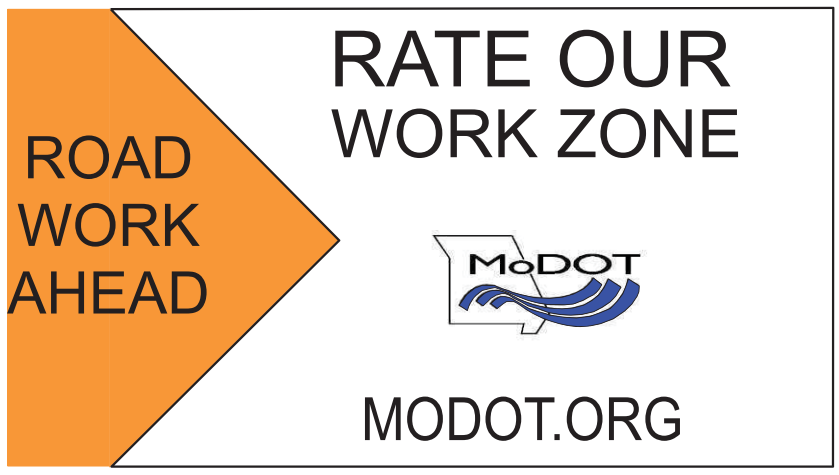
Starting this spring, new signs will appear in advance of work zones. Against a bright blue background, these signs simply say "Rate Our Work Zone – modot.org."

"We are placing these signs near the beginning of work zones as a way to encourage motorists to tell us what they think," said Julie Stotlemeyer, traffic liaison engineer. "Once motorists safely reach their destinations, we want their feedback on what it was like to travel through the work zone."

MoDOT is looking for the public's opinion on a variety of work zone details – including clear and understandable signing, channelizers and barrels providing proper guidance, and whether or not the work zone caused motorists any delays.

"We are working to have these signs displayed not just for construction projects, but on maintenance activities as well," said Stotlemeyer. "You might not see the sign at every work zone, but we want to use them where they will serve as a reminder to motorists that our survey is out there if they have time to fill it out."

The purpose of the signs, and the work zone surveys, is to maintain an exemplary level of customer service. The department uses those survey results to evaluate work zones, look for ways to improve them and meet customer expectations.



One of the new signs motorists might start seeing this spring in work zones.

"Ultimately, we want to make work zones safe and keep motorists moving through them with the smallest delay possible," said Stotlemeyer.

All motorist traveling through a work zone, including MoDOT employees, are encouraged to participate in the on-line survey at www.modot.mo.gov/workzones/Comments.htm.

MoDOT Spokesbarrel's Year in Review

Little did I know when I was first set in the kcICON work zone, that my temporary guardianship of a band of highway workers and bridge builders would grow into permanent status as Missouri's statewide work zone spokesbarrel.

A lot has happened in the year since my promotion. I've celebrated the completion of Kansas City's Bond Bridge with a front-row seat at the fireworks and light show and oversaw the opening of the first diverging diamond interchange in the area – at I-435 and Front Street. With our crazy schedules, it's a miracle that my girlfriend, Barrel Betty and I managed to squeeze in a date night at a Missouri Mavericks hockey game.

I hung out in the Highway Gardens during the State Fair – or as I like to call it, Corndog Heaven! One windy night, I rolled on over to the fried green tomato stand and ate until I passed out. The fair staff had to haul my carcass back into the garden and prop me up for another day of greeting visitors.

Helping the St. Louis district commemorate cancer awareness month.

I've supervised the pouring of smog-eating concrete on Route 141 in St. Louis and helped that district commemorate breast cancer awareness month. Now I'm hanging out on Interstate 70 in "the Lou", watching crews prepare approaches for the new Mississippi River Bridge.

I've had a mishap or two along the way. The worst was the barrelnapping.

Some young ladies approached my work area near Lake of the Ozarks last summer and as I began to warn them about the dangers of occupying a work zone without proper safety equipment, they cut me off at the knees and lashed me to the top of their vehicle.

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National Work Zone Awareness Week April 23 - 27

A national focus on work zone awareness takes place this month. MoDOT employees urge motorists to slow down and rid themselves of any possible distractions, such as talking on cell phones, when entering a work zone. Every employee working on our roadways want to leave the job unharmed, each and every day. In this edition of Connections, several employees share their close call experiences to help remind all of us to be watchful of our highway heroes.

To hear the full details of the employee's stories in their own words, see the videos at *www.modot.mo.gov/Connections/CloseCalls.htm*

Brandon Cracraft

Performing Tasks Near Traffic Give Workers a Bad Feeling – or Worse

by Steve Porter

Kathi Brundage knows that feeling. So does Brandon Cracraft. And Eric Thompson.

They know fist hand that sudden close encounter with death while just trying to do their jobs in a highway work zone.

Three survivors in the Kansas City District talk about work zone awareness from the worker's standpoint as MoDOT and partners throughout the country observe Work Zone Awareness Week April 23-27.

For Kathi, it was painful and startling. While she was inspecting a paving operation on Route 24 in Independence alongside active traffic, a vehicle came too close and clipped her with its side mirror. "I was standing on the channelizer when a car hit me," she said. "At first, it didn't register with me what had happened. I ended up with a big bruise on the back of my right arm."Kathi said working in a construction zone near traffic can be nerve-wracking at times, "and when they don't even slow down, you think, 'Seriously? You didn't even see me?' "

Brandon also had no warning. A contractor's truck backed over him, then kept backing.

Brandon was the senior construction inspector for a deck repair on Manchester Bridge at I-70. "I was walking away from the contractor's truck, and the contractor was backing up. He backed over me with the truck," Cracraft said. The driver told MoDOT he saw Brandon, then lost track of him as the driver continued to back up. "It crushed my shoulder blade and the middle knuckle of my right hand middle finger," Brandon said. "I was out of work five months, and did therapy during that time."

Always alert to safety issues, Brandon says "now I'm hyper vigilant."

Eric Thompson

Eric said a contractor saved him. He was a paving inspector on a job on I-70, and was walking with his back to traffic, but going in the same direction, when a worker on the job grabbed him and pulled him away from a truck that was carrying a flat precast concrete panel hanging off the side. "At the very least, it would have clipped me in the head and killed me, and if it had caught me straight on, it would have decapitated me," Eric said. "I wouldn't have seen it coming." Like Kathi and Brandon, Eric is even more alert to what may happen in a construction zone.

Kathi Brundage

No Substitute for Vigilance

by Bob Edwards

The day was sunny and warm in Springfield. The work zone was properly set up in the left lane on one side of a four-lane expressway. Approaching drivers had plenty of sight distance.

Republic Maintenance Crew Leader Ron Plaster had just picked up tools to use in a pavement repair operation. He heard a noise behind him. Cones were being dragged underneath a car that was trying to beat a line of other vehicles to the merge point.

As he turned, he was struck by the car's side rear-view mirror and knocked down. Fortunately he was only bruised. But the incident of several years ago made him realize that being in the right place inside a work zone does not guarantee a worker's safety.

"It just goes to show you that even on the best days, things can go wrong," he said. "So be really careful. Watch what's happening around you."

Ron Plaster

Spokesbarrel's Year in Review

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I was forced to car surf to a lakeside condo. I understand this escapade made the paper and was a source of great alarm among fans of my Facebook page - facebook.com/MOBarrelBob.

Those fans are one reason I enjoy my job. They report Bob sightings, help me cheer on Missouri's sports teams, selected my Halloween costume and express their appreciation for the other reason I love my job – my heroes – Missouri highway workers!

For Your Safety

During the month of May a nationwide focus will be placed on three campaigns - safety belt usage, motorcycle awareness and teen alcohol use.

"Click It or Ticket" May 21 thru June 3 is a national campaign designed to increase seat belt use and reduce highway fatalities. The campaign couples high-visibility enforcement with education. Here are the facts:

- Seat belts are the most effective safety feature ever invented and have helped save thousands of lives.
- Sadly, one in five Americans fail to regularly wear a seat belt when driving or riding in a motor vehicle.
- Missouri's seat belt use is 79 percent, compared to 85 percent nationwide.
- Car and SUV drivers are most likely to buckle up while truck and teen drivers are least likely to wear a seat belt.
- Seven out of 10 Missourians killed in a traffic crash are unbuckled.
- Seat belts reduce the risk of fatal injury by 45 percent.

Motor Cycle Awareness is also a national campaign to target awareness on sharing the road with motorcycles. This campaign reminds us that:

- Motorcycles are vehicles with the same rights and privileges as any motor vehicle on the roadway
- About 20 percent of all passenger vehicle crashes end up in injury or death, but almost 80 percent of all motorcycle crashes end up in injury or death.
- Ninety-nine percent of the people who died in crashes involving a motorcycle on Missouri roads were the motorcyclist.
- Missouri law requires all motorcycle riders to wear a DOT-approved helmet.
- A rider without a helmet is 40 per cent more likely to die in a crash than one with a helmet.

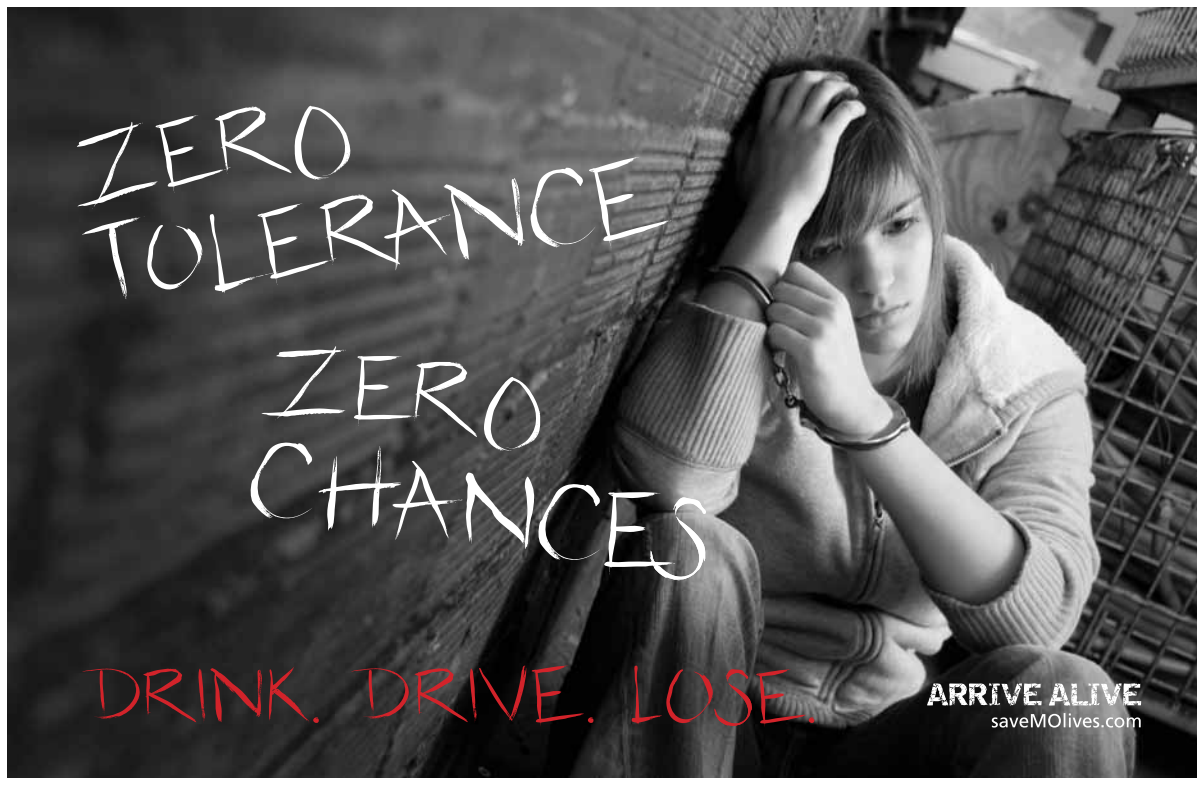
Youth Alcohol Awareness

Drinking and driving are a lethal combination, even more so when young drivers are involved. This campaign targets underage drinking to decrease alcohol-related crashes. Did you know:

- Impaired driving contributes to nearly 30 percent of all Missouri traffic fatalities.

- Teens are at far greater risk of death in an alcohol-related crash than the overall population, despite the fact they cannot legally purchase or publicly possess alcohol in any State.
- In 2010, 217 people were killed and 897 seriously injured in crashes involving an impaired driver.
- Missouri has a Zero Tolerance Law. If you are under 21, your license will be suspended if you're caught driving with even a trace of alcohol in your system.
- If you cause a fatal crash while intoxicated, you can be charged with involuntary manslaughter, a a felony resulting in up to seven years of jail time, a $5,000 fine or both.

Please remember to always practice safety on Missouri highways. Information provided by the US Department of Transportation and Missouri's Coalition for Roadway Safety.



March Service Anniversaries

35 Years

John W. Koenig	CO
Dan E. Ream	SW
Allan B. Markt	NW

30 Years

Robert L. King	SW
Steven E. Burchell	SW

25 Years

Paul R. Sterrett	CO
Karla L. Cryer	SW
Kenneth R. Holtgrewe	CE
Tudor Rafa	CE
Judy M. Franke	KC

20 Years

Jennifer R. Prenger	CO
Janis M. Gieck	CO
Stowe K. Johnson	CO
Steve B. Bates	CO
Michael T. Meinhardt	SW
Aydogan L. Girgin	SW
Shayne Engel	SW
Danny Williams	SL
Michael W. Frizzell	KC
Ernest F. Fickle	KC
Timothy S. Inman	NE
Michele L. House	NE
Danny R. Sawyer	NE
Kevin J. Brawner	NE
Gene M. Ryan	NE
Kevin N. Teeter	NW
Robert L. Hughson	NW

15 Years

Dorothy J. Roush	CO
Donald W. Crites	SE
Daniel W. Lacy	SE
Martin D. Elliott	SE
Danny L. Bedwell	SE
Nancy A. Pietrzak	SW
Tim B. Smith	SW
John E. Pratt	SW
Debra J. Lioubinski	SW
Charlotte D. Lipsey	KC

10 Years

Lester Woods	CO
Johnny D. White	SE
Craig A. Fisher	SW
Richard E. Starchman	SW
Philip R. Smith	SW
Lowell C. House	SL
Lucas K. Meese	SL
Javal L. Burton	SL
Danny R. Scott	CE
Brian E. Black	CE
Wayne L. Creek	CE
Hope L. Visconti	KC
Marcus R. Stauffer	NE
Kirk M. Youngblood	NE
Zachary K. Stout	NW
Billy D. Hamilton	NW

5 Years

Lonnie G. Gibbs	SE
Michael R. Mahurin	SE
Adam J. Contreras	SE
Gary V. Schlosser	SE
Julia F. Morgan	SE
Angela L. Fields	SE
Shawndra E. Burkhart	SE
Christopher D. Curtis	SW
Ryan P. Horvatic	SW
Teresa M. Simon	SW
Yvonne M. Elliott	SL
Christopher J. Cruse	SL
Stanley D. Shields	CE
Edwin G. Randolph	CE
Russell E. Persicke	CE
Cheryl A. Dean	CE
Joseph W. Webber	KC
Davin D. Werths	KC
Brian K. Hall	NW
Timmy M. Porter	NW

February Retirements

Name	District	Years of Service	
Jack Snelling	NE	29	
Charles Spegal	NE	36	
Antonio Bryant	KC	31	
Randall Ashley	KC	25	
Joseph Caldarella	KC	13	
Barbara Flannagan	KC	24	
Lawrence Richmond	SL	13	
Jeffrey Head	SL	28	
Richard Hamilton	SL	30	
Stanley Williams	SL	11	
Robert Herzberg	SL	27	
Eugene Ahlers	SW	28	
Robert Stuart	SW	27	
Steven Dunn	SW	27	
Gary Vandergrift	SW	27	
Ralph Underwood	SE	34	
Randy Pamperien	SE	35	
Clifford Stueve	SE	38	
Kaye Stacy	CO	28	
Larry Huskey	CO	5	
Linda Parkes	CO	15	

Note: Dennis Griessel, D6, retired August 1, 2011 with 28 years of service.

In Memoriam

Active Employees

David Wiederholt	NW	Feb. 20

Retirees

William Morrision	Former D4	Jan. 28
Ronald Tauschel	Former D6	Feb. 11
Edward Gabathuler	Former D6	Feb. 11
Herbert Cooper, Jr.	Former D9	Feb. 12
Lee Campbell	Former D10	Feb. 13
Nellie Lewis	Former D7	Feb. 14
Ralph Foster	Former D6	Feb. 14
William Craig	Former D2	Feb. 19
William Filley	Former D1	Feb. 19
Eldon Pendergraft	Former D7	Feb. 19
Calvin Orr	Former D8	Feb. 21
Vernon Carter	Former D8	Feb. 26
John Menger	Former D3	Feb. 28

Central Office

Your Voice

On Safety and Security

by Tammy Wallace

The Workplace Security Team, lead by Central Office Health and Safety Manager Jeff Lockwood, is taking another step in its efforts to improve security in the workplace – a 24/7 phone line to report security issues.

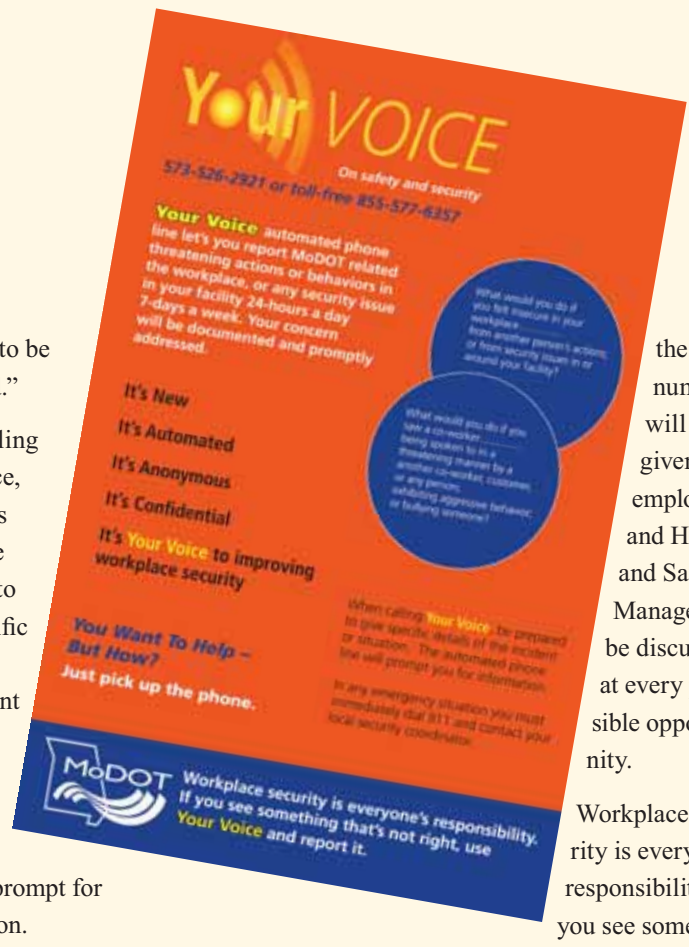
Your Voice is a fully automated phone line that allows employees to report non-emergency, non-life threatening workplace security issues, such as a co-worker showing aggressive behavior or a security issue at a facility.

"Our team felt strongly about having this capability for employees," said Lockwood. "If anyone sees threatening behavior or problems in or around a facility relating to security, we want to know about it. This automated phone line will make it easy for employees to report those types of situations."

Lockwood stressed it is important for employees to remember that this is not an emergency line. In any emergency situation employees should immediately dial 911, and then contact their local security coordinator.

The team still believes that reporting workplace security issues to a supervisor is the best way to bring a problem or potential problem to someone's attention, but sometimes employees are not comfortable in doing that.

"This automated phone line gives employees the opportunity to report security issues and remain completely anonymous," said Lockwood. "The fact that they can make a report 24/7 and do so anonymously if they choose, will help make sure we are being informed if there are security issues out there that need to be addressed."



When calling Your Voice, employees need to be prepared to give specific details of the incident or situation. The automated phone line will prompt for information.

To spread the word about this new security measure, posters will be sent to all facilities and departments to place on bulletin boards, business type cards with the phone numbers will be given to all employees, and Health and Safety Managers will be discussing at every possible opportunity.

Workplace security is everyone's responsibility. If you see something that's not right, use Your Voice and report it - 573-526-2921 or toll-free at 855-577-6357.

Employee Benefits Moves to New Location

The MoDOT and Patrol Medical and Life Insurance Plan, Employee Benefits Office has relocated in the Central Office building. They can now be found on the ground floor next to the mail distribution center, near the main entrance.

Office hours are 7:30 am. until 4:30 p.m. Mon. thru Fri., and they can be reached toll-free at 1-877-863-9406.

All visitors, including retirees, should enter the main building entrance located off of W. Capitol Avenue. Front desk staff will help direct visitors to the office.

"We have only changed our location," said Employee Benefits Manager Jennifer Wilbers. "We have not changed our commitment to providing outstanding service to our active and retired employees."

Cathy Morrison

Senior Financial Services Technician Connie Stottlemyre is ready to welcome employees to the new office location.

for more info

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Organizational Changes Delay Employee Survey

by Jim Dickson

MoDOT's annual employee satisfaction survey will take its second year off in 2012, but will return in 2013. With the large number of organizational changes occurring in the past two years, department senior managers chose not to conduct the annual employee satisfaction survey. According to Chief Financial Officer Roberta Broeker, management is still concerned with employee satisfaction, but the assessment needs to be done on our final structure in 2013.

"We are still in the midst of getting the right people in the right jobs, and won't complete that until June," said Broeker. "We think it's important that everyone know the outcome of job fills before we survey. Honestly, we also need to get through the very difficult last step of layoffs before we turn our attention to this effort. We know, based on the number of negative comments we habitually receive about conducting employee satisfaction surveys, that some of our employees think its wasted effort. To address that, we want to involve a cross section of the workforce in developing the next survey, and that too will take a little extra time."

In the meantime, Broeker encourages department managers and supervisors across the state to be open to employee concerns and look for opportunities to improve the workplace and employee satisfaction. The next annual employee satisfaction survey is scheduled for May 2013.

Black History Month

Jackie Kampeter

Students in Performing & Visual Arts at Lincoln University perform a dance ensemble to highlight African heritage. The performance was held last month in the Truman Building as part of Black History Month.

Northwest District

Pothole Patrol

by Melissa Black

Flowers aren't the only thing that pop out with warmer weather. As drivers across Missouri know, the dreaded pothole is one of the unfortunate side effects of this time of year. That's why the Missouri Department of Transportation maintenance crews decided to find out just how many potholes could be patched in a two week time period over the entire 20 counties in Northwest Missouri to give motorists in the area a smoother ride on the roadways.

"The warmer weather has given us this opportunity to get out there a little earlier this year and aggressively tackle the potholes at one time," says Marty Liles, MoDOT Northwest District Maintenance and Traffic Engineer. "We really want drivers to have as smooth a ride as possible on our roads, and hopefully we can patch a lot of these potholes all at once."

"We are always looking for ways to improve our roads," Liles says. "We're out there every day keeping our roads in as good of shape as possible, and this is a great time to focus on getting rid of as many potholes as possible."

The public can monitor MoDOT's progress at www.modot.org/northwest for a daily number of potholes filled and a total number to date. For more information about other MoDOT projects, call 1-888-ASK-MoDOT (888-275-6636 , like MoDOT on Facebook or follow them on Twitter.

After only five days, crews have already filled 14,446 potholes.

Holly L. Hailey

Assistant District Engineer Tony McGaughy and District Bridge Engineer Scott Stephens met with local media representatives on March 5 to speak about closing southbound I-229 to make repairs.

A special man lift truck was brought into St. Joseph from Jefferson City to help our crews reach the areas of most concern. After meeting with MoDOT engineers, the media representatives were allowed to watch and record the actual repair operation.

Holly L. Hailey

The media got a chance to see how bridge repairs are made.

Last Month's Events

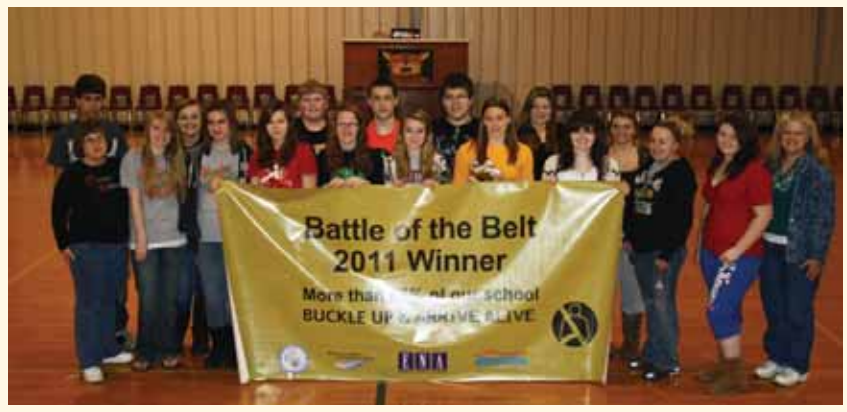
by M. Elaine Justus

Melissa Black

A Safe & Sound public meeting was held in Halls, Mo. on Feb. 28. District Engineer Don Wichern was on hand to help answer any questions.

Safety Action Team members Bill Bledsoe and Lee Bearce presented Tim Waters with his first place prize.

Tim Waters from Roadside received a sweatshirt with the MoDOT logo for his winning safety slogan entry, "Work Smart - Take Safety to Heart!" Also receiving awards were second place winner, Kris Buczek of Construction for his entry of "A Risk Taker is an Accident Maker." Third place went to Curt Grossman from the Carrollton Maintenance building for his entry "Safety is Your Future's Greatest Investment!"



Holly L. Hailey

For the second year in a row, Osborn High School took the top prize for the Battle of the Belt competition.

M. Elaine Justus

Mural artist Garin Baker shows Rock Port residents examples of his work.

The theme of the new Rock Port Welcome Center is: "Energy Conservation and Alternative Energy: Past & Present." To give the artists a better understanding of the commitment the Rock Port community has made to alternative energy, they were given a personal, guided tour of a couple of the region's wind farms. None of them had ever been that close to wind mills. Ironically, the Cooper Nuclear Power Plant could be seen from the same hilltop.

Melissa Black

The students of Milan High School sign a pledge to always use their seatbelts as part of the "Buckle Up and Win" campaign.

On March 12 & 13, five finalists for the Rock Port Welcome Center mural project were brought into the Northwest District. They were first interviewed by the mural review committee comprised of public art professionals and representatives from the Division of Tourism in the Rock Port area. An Open House public meeting was held in Rock Port to given the residents of the area an opportunity to meet the artists and see what kinds of work they do.

M. Elaine Justus

The artists received a personal tour of the Rock Port Wind Farm.

As part of the March teen youth seatbelt campaign, MoDOT staff accompanied the Highway Patrol to an educational event at Milan High School where the kids were able to ride the seatbelt convincer as well as sign a pledge to always wear their seatbelts.

for more info

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Northeast District

I-70 Tolling Dominates Dialogue Session

With more than 160 area residents in attendance, Chief Engineer Dave Nichols and District Engineer Paula Gough, fielded several dozen questions about transportation during the most recent "Dialogue with MoDOT" session held in Warrenton. However, the majority of the questions surrounded the I-70 tolling topic that has arisen as a potential way to make improvements to the interstate.

"There were specific questions about where the tolls would be placed and concerns that those who use the interstate to commute would be the hardest hit; they felt like funding should be spread around the state," Paula said.

The condition of the interstate, even though iterated by the chief engineer and depicted with an example in front of the audience, was not an issue for the audience. Amid the concerns about I-70 tolling, there were compliments to maintenance crews and MoDOT staff for the work they do to maintain the roads and bridges.

"The reason for our dialogue sessions is to be more accessible in our customers' environment, which helps them be more comfortable asking questions," Paula said. She doesn't shy away from the tough questions, including those about funding or tolling. "We want to know what people think, and this is a great way to find out...in their community," she added.

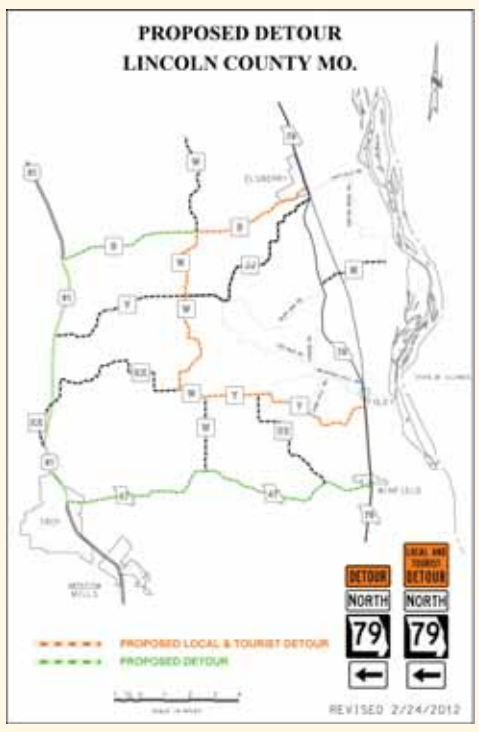
District Engineer Paula Gough addresses Warren County residents about transportation issues in the area as Chief Engineer Dave Nichols and Boonslick Regional Planning Executive Director Steve Etcher, who served as moderator for the event, listen.

Project Changes Please Highway 79 Community

It's never a pleasant subject to broach when MoDOT proposes closing a road to make repairs, and communities along Highway 79 have been hit hard in the last few years. This is why changes have been made to the contract to replace a bridge near Foley. Working with the community, MoDOT has shortened the contract time for the project and added a second detour that will be signed for local and tourist traffic.

"The economy has been tough on everyone, and we've had 79 closed off and on for several years due to landslides, so we wanted to mitigate the inconvenience as much as possible," said District Engineer Paula Gough. Another bridge near Elsberry is slated to close for replacement next year.

"We are working with that community and area officials to make a similar proposal," Paula explained.



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Fire Department Comes to the Rescue in Partnership

The Wellsville Fire Protection District used their equipment to help flush ditches and culverts. Pictured are Bob Stoddard, Kurt Blacklock, and Jeff Moore. Stoddard and Moore are firefighters and Blacklock is a crew leader in New Florence.

Montgomery County crews sought assistance from the Wellsville Fire Protection District to use their fire truck to help flush out ditches and culverts in the Wellsville area last month. "Prior to doing the work in and near Wellsville, we realized we needed equipment with larger capacity and flushing capabilities, so we contacted the fire department, and they were more than willing to help us out with this project," said New Florence Maintenance Supervisor Dion Thurman. Dion said they had the big tank and the hose to make the project go quickly, and it was done in a day and a half.

Around the District...

Crews in the Lincoln County area have been working to secure the piers due to a scour problem on the Cuivre River bridges on US 61 just north of Troy. Pictured is Scott Wasson of Hannibal maintenance and Simon Begley of Palmyra maintenance operating the track hoe.

Mark Twain High School Tigers, with the help of several MoDOT employees, were recognized for their participation in the Battle of the Belt program and their 95.45% seat belt usage. Pictured with the cheerleaders and faculty are Alan Williams, Hannibal project office, Tanya Carlisle, right of way, and Stephen Bogue, NE Coalition for Roadway Safety outreach coordinator.

Signs have gone up across the US 36 Corridor in Missouri to identify it as the Chicago to Kansas City Expressway and dual designated US 36 and I-35 to Kansas City as MO 110. The effort was a push from the Tri-State Development group and local leaders who asked for the signs at the December Commission meeting.

KansasCity District

Celebrating Disadvantaged Business Enterprise's Graduation Candidates

Office of External Civil Rights Hosts Annual Event

by Gina Myles

The Kansas City District's Office of External Civil Rights celebrated candidates for graduation on March 15 for the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Supportive Services Entrepreneurship Training Program. The graduate firms participated in a 10 week business training which utilized the award-winning national Kauffman Foundation's FastTrac – Growth Venture Program. The program was developed by the late entrepreneur and philanthropist, Ewing Marion Kauffman, to advance entrepreneurial knowledge, growth and success. The presentation ceremony was held at the KC district headquarters in Lee's Summit.

The graduating class consisted of business owners from several Kansas City area companies; Nilson Goez, CEO - Infinite Energy Construction, Jerry Woods - United Underground Utilities, Inc., Jonathan Dickens, CEO - Dicken's Demolition & Construction, LLC., L. Dewayne Beasley, CEO - Yelsaeb Enterprises, Carol Taylor, CEO - A Clean Slate, Ruth Turner, CEO - 3T Design & Development, LLC, Sheryl Clanton, CEO - McCorkendale Construction, Inc., Raymond Davis, CEO - Affordable Lawn Care, Jayne Njuguna - Immaculate Enterprises, LLC., Valerie McCaw, CEO, - VSM Engineering, LLC., AbduRaqeeb (AJ) Joseph White, CEO - Hejjra Electric Contracting, LLC., and Jacques Pierre Fransaw for TSI Engineering, Inc. The candidates will receive graduation certificates contingent upon submittal of their final business plan by March 30 to Senior External Civil Rights Specialist Donnetta Cole.

Jennifer Benefiled

Senior External Civil Rights Specialist Donnetta Cole (left front row) organized and emceed a presentation and graduation celebration March 15 for 13 area business owners and participating members of the 2012 Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Supportive Services Entrepreneurship Training Program.

Cole opened the ceremony by introducing Assistant District Engineer Chris Redline. Redline spoke to the potential graduates about the statewide opportunities throughout MoDOT for DBE groups. A panel consisting of George Phillips of Phillips and Associates, Chris Kelly, Program Coordinator of Supplier Diversity for Metropolitan Community College District and Mark Allen of UMKC's Office of Research and Economic Development critiqued the candidates on their business presentations made to the group and offered constructive criticism to the candidates.

Graduation candidate Jayne Njuguna said she was pleased to participate in the program. "I thought I knew a lot about business, but once I started going through the classes, I found out I really didn't know much at all. It has been a tremendous, fantastic experience. I learned so much from attending the classes."

MoDOT's Supportive Services Entrepreneurship Training Program assists certified DBE firm owners in increasing their business skills in specific and measurable areas. The program emphasizes development of a successful business plan, collaborative engagement of participants, and guest speakers from MoDOT and the construction community. Those who complete the program are positioned for improved readiness in their field and to successfully compete for contracts in the construction industry. Currently, MoDOT Supportive Services conducts this program regularly in the St. Louis and Kansas City metropolitan areas.

Kelly said the presentation ceremony is meaningful to the program participants. "It brings value to the community because it better prepares the graduates."

A Ground Breaking Day

by Kerri Lewis

March 12 was a ground breaking day. The KC district celebrated the kick-off of two major projects with ground breaking ceremonies.

The start of the Route 13 North Leg project in Johnson County was made official at a ground breaking ceremony. About 50 people joined Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission Chairman Rudy Farber, state, county and local officials, representatives from the Route 13 Corridor Committee and the Pioneer Trails Rural Planning Committee to break ground for the project.

The project will extend the last five miles of the 11-mile-long Route 13 East Loop around Warrensburg. Emery Sapp & Sons is the general contractor for the $10,126,672 project. Work will conclude in August 2013.

The final segment completes a long-planned realignment of the main highway route. By tying in the north leg several miles north of Route 50, through traffic will avoid stop-and-go congestion in downtown Warrensburg. The new segment will be constructed between the portion completed in 2010 at Route HH north of Route 50 to a point of existing Route 13 just south of the intersection with Routes V and OO.

Another ceremony, this one in Clay County, broke ground on the $24 million project to build two new interchanges on Route 169. More than 50 people stopped by to help kick-off the project with MoDOT, city, county and state officials.

The new interchanges at 96th and 108th Streets in Kansas City will improve traffic safety, provide better access, and accommodate economic development. Full access diamond interchanges will replace the signalized intersections at 95th Terrace and 108th Street.

Awarded to Ideker Construction Company, these safety improvements are a welcome sight for the thousands of motorists and MoDOT's partners in the Northland. Work has started and will conclude November 2013.

Photo by Steve Porter

KC District Engineer Dan Niec and recently appointed MHTC Chair Rudy Farber (center) turn dirt to signify the start of the Route 13 North Leg project in Johnson County on March 12. About 50 attendees joined in the project kick-off.

Photo by Jennifer Benefield

MoDOT Area Engineer Shelie Daniel (7th from left) surrounded by city and state elected officials, representatives from the City of Kansas City, Missouri (KCMO), and members of the Northland Cathedral broke ground on two new interchanges to be constructed at Route 169 and 96th and 108th Streets during a March 12 ceremony. This project is made possible by many partners to include funding by KCMO, design by MoDOT, and construction by Ideker Construction Company. MoDOT will manage construction which is now under way and scheduled to be completed by November 2013.

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Central District

Bridge Beams Placed for U.S. 63 Interchange Project

A new interchange along U.S. 63 in Boone County is taking shape, as construction continues at Route H just south of Columbia.

MoDOT is building the new interchange to improve safety and traffic flow along U.S. 63.

Contractor crews began work in August 2011, clearing, grading and completing drainage work in the project area. In the last few months, crews have been working on the Route H bridge and the new Turkey Creek bridge on the new southbound U.S. 63 lanes.

The diamond interchange and new southbound lanes will allow for safe access to and from the Columbia Regional Airport and provide additional economic development opportunities for the community.

The $9.8 million project will include new southbound lanes from north of Route 163 to Route H. The new lanes are built in the median, allowing the existing southbound lanes to become an outer roadway.

Cathy Morrison

Traffic on northbound U.S. 63 was stopped for short periods on March 1 to allow for the placement of four beams that will become part of the Route H bridge. The beams over the southbound lanes were placed from the shoulder, without interuption to traffic.

Cathy Morrison

Crew workers Cruz Chavez and Devin Harre work to set a beam for the bridge.

Additional innovative safety improvements are part of the project, including j-turns, acceleration, and deceleration lanes at intersection along the highway.

These improvements will allow vehicles to safely merge in and out of traffic, reducing the chance for severe right-angle crashes that can occur as vehicles attempt to cross four lanes of fast-moving traffic.

As work continues over the summer, MoDOT reminds motorists to slow down, pay attention, and proceed through this and all work zones with care. The project is scheduled for completion in late 2012.

Sidewalk Project Starts in Camdenton

In just a few months, you can put on your walking shoes and stroll across the U.S. 54 bridge over Route 5 in Camdenton.

Contractor crews began work in mid-March on over 2,000 feet of new sidewalk that will be built parallel to eastbound U.S. 54 leading up to and across the bridge over Route 5.

"This work includes new sidewalk along U.S. 54 and widening the existing eastbound bridge structure to accommodate a sidewalk," said Bob Lynch, area engineer. "This is a project that improves safety for pedestrians, but also provides access to residential and commercial areas."

The $500,000 project also includes widening the northbound Route 5 exit ramp to eastbound U.S. 54 to allow for dual right turn lanes. This will decrease minor traffic back-ups on the exit ramp and provide tractor-trailer trucks with more room to make right turns at the top of the ramp.

The work is being completed in coordination with the City of Camdenton. Enhancement funds, which are set aside for the improvement of pedestrian facilities, are being used for the sidewalk construction.

Construction will be complete by the end of May.

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Busy Schedule Set for Bridge Projects in Osage and Miller Counties

Several highway construction projects involving road closures will get underway this year in Osage and Miller Counties and the district is working to schedule the closures to minimize the impact to travelers.

The first project is a Safe & Sound Bridge improvement on Route 133, over Sugar Creek in Meta. The bridge closed for replacement on March 5. The route is scheduled to remain closed for about 45 days.

"The community expressed concern about the timing of this bridge closure and a second closure on Route 133 to realign the roadway south of Meta," said District Design Engineer Nicole Hood. "With additional road work taking place in Miller County, we have to keep a close eye on the construction schedules because they can affect detour routes for motorists."

Based on the community's comments, the Sugar Creek bridge replacement was moved from late April and the Route 133 realignment work has been pushed back to September. Route 133 will be closed to traffic for the realignment for about two and a half months.

Three bridges in Miller County will be replaced this season, including Route 52 over Humphrey's Creek, Route 17 over Dog Creek, and Route 17 over Saline Creek. All three projects will require the bridges to close for construction, with the following schedule:

- **Route 52, Humphrey's Creek**
  Closes early April, for 45 days
- **Route 17, Dog Creek**
  Closes mid-May, for 53 days
- **Route 17, Saline Creek**
  Closes early June, for about three months

"We've listened to the concerns of the communities to keep the Route 17 work from occurring at the same time as the Route 133 work," said Hood. "We made adjustments to the construction schedules and appreciate the support and input of the communities."

St. Louis District

Missouri Hosts National Work Zone Awareness Kickoff

by Andrew Gates

As the construction season rolls into full swing this month, MoDOT will be taking the national spotlight as the lead state to kick off the 2012 National Work Zone Awareness Week activities. The department was selected to host the kick-off event on its Route 141 reconstruction project in St. Louis.

The event is scheduled for April 23, 2012 at 10 a.m. on the Route 141 project in Chesterfield.

At this time, Federal Highway Administrator Victor Mendez is expected to attend the event, as are the leaders of several national organizations concerned about ensuring safe work zones across the nation.

The department will also host the National Work Zone traveling memorial for National Work Zone Awareness Week. The memorial will be set up for the kickoff event, then moved to a public St. Louis location for the remainder of the week. During the kickoff event, the department will also share several other displays to remind employees and drivers about the importance of work zone awareness.

During this week, drivers are also reminded that they have a responsibility to slow down in work zones, pay attention while they are on the roadways and eliminate driving distractions such as cell phone use, texting, or eating.

"As we head into the construction season, we understand that every day is a day to be aware of the work zones we set up and work in," said Ed Hassinger, St. Louis MoDOT district engineer. "We are continually monitoring the flow of traffic through all our work zones to make sure that traffic keeps flowing smoothly, or making adjustments to the work zone if it isn't. The department has incorporated several techniques to help keep traffic flowing through the Route 141 work zones during the two years of construction.

"We wanted to select a state that's doing something wonderful that could be shared with the rest of the nation," says James Baron, director of communications for the American Traffic Safety Services Association. "The national committee selected Missouri because we were really impressed with what the state is doing with work zone awareness."

"This type of project is a perfect example of how transportation affects us all is some way or another," said Don Hillis, MoDOT's Assistant Chief Engineer. "Whether we're talking about work zone safety, traffic flow, reducing congestion or economic impacts – transportation is personal to each of us.

"This combination of a major construction project, extensive cooperation between state and local governments, environmental stewardship and construction innovation make this a perfect location for a national event about work zone safety," Hillis says. "This also gives Missouri the opportunity to highlight a first-class construction project, and show the importance of keeping workers and drivers safe in a high-volume work-zone environment."

Every April since 2000, the Federal Highway Administration, American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials and the American Traffic Safety Services Association have partnered together to host a national event to recognize and focus on roadway work zone safety. The event, as we know it today, is National Work Zone Awareness Week.

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MoDOT Works with North County Leaders for I-270 Corridor Study

by Kara Price

MoDOT works with the I-270 Advisory Group periodically to explore options to improve safety along Interstate 270 in North County. This advisory group consits of community leaders and partners throughout North County.

MoDOT's Lisa Kuntz, transportation planning specialist, discusses options to improve safety along I-270 in North County with community leaders.

Groundbreaking Marks Beginning of Major Project in Jefferson County

by Kara Price

MoDOT, elected officials and community leaders in Jefferson County broke ground March 2 for the McNutt Road Widening project. The event marks the start of construction to widen McNutt Road between I-55 and Routes 61/67.

MoDOT's St. Louis district recently held a groundbreaking ceremony in early March for the Interstate 55 and McNutt Road Widening project in Jefferson County. This event marks the beginning of construction to widen McNutt Road between Interstate 55 and Routes 61/67.

MoDOT, local elected officials, community leaders and Jefferson County residents and businesses participated in the ceremony.

This area needs to be widened to accommodate the capacity of traffic that use this roadway on a daily basis. MoDOT will widen McNutt Road to four thru lanes with additional turn lanes. Also, the Scenic Drive intersection will be relocated approximately 300 feet to the east of the existing intersection.

This project was awarded to Vee Jay Cement Contracting for approximately $5.8 million and is scheduled to be complete by early November 2012. For more information on this widening project: *www.modot.org/stlouis*

"We are excited to break ground on a significant construction project in the Festus area," said Judy Wagner, MoDOT Area Engineer for Franklin and Jefferson Counties.

She added, "This project will help traffic run smoother and accommodate for future economic growth in the area."

Southwest District

Safety in Work Zones Starts with Planning

by Bob Edwards

A heavy construction and maintenance workload this year has prompted Southwest District leaders to emphasize more than ever attention to detail in setting work zones.

"No matter what type of work zone, we have to do our best to protect the workers and the public," District Engineer Becky Baltz said.

Construction employees must look at ongoing work zones with fresh eyes each day, Baltz said. Maintenance employees need "a plan for their work zones before they leave the building." And any employee, she said, should call in if they see a problem with a utility or commercial contractor work zone.

To prepare for this year's effort, District Safety and Health Manager Gary McLarry and Senior Safety Officer Gary Clinton have been reminding employees to observe the basics of safety on the road.

"Good work zones. Good flagging procedures. Good placement of signs. Good traffic flow. Proper placement of vehicles in a work zone," McLarry said.

Refresher flagger training was provided last fall. Truck-mounted attenuator operations are targeted this spring.

Drivers statewide will have more say about work zones, thanks to new "Rate Our Work Zone" signs being placed at selected projects. The signs encourage drivers to fill out an online work zone survey on MoDOT's web site after they get home or to work.

In the Southwest District, rating signs will be installed at three projects: bridge rehabilitation and road resurfacing on Route 65 between Ozark and Branson, building alternating passing lanes on Route 37 between Monett and the Missouri-Arkansas state line and building a new interchange at Main and Zora streets in Joplin.

District Construction and Materials Engineer Steve Campbell said drivers often look at a work zone differently than those who set them up and work in them every day, and incorporating good ideas from the public into a work zone can enhance safety.

"It gives us the opportunity to improve what we're doing," Campbell said.

Southwest District employees are helping with the statewide Work Zone Awareness campaign scheduled for April 23-27. Republic Maintenance Crew Leader Ron Plaster and Monett Maintenance Supervisor Bryan Ozbun were interviewed for safety videos being produced by the Central Office.

Ozbun said in his interview that an important part of his building's work-plan meeting every morning is a reminder to workers to look out for one another.

"One thing that I share with the crew all the time is that we're in this together, and it takes every one of us to be able to do a job safely," Ozbun said.

He also wants crew members to mentally trade places with drivers "to be in the driver's seat ... to understand what it's like to come through the work zone."

Major Projects in 2012

- Completing reconstruction of Route 60/65, Springfield
- Replacing Route 160 bridge over I-44, Springfield
- Building Diverging Diamond Interchange on Bus. 65 (Chestnut Expressway) at Route 65, Springfield
- Completing four-laning of Route 13, Branson West to Kimberling City
- Completing four-laning of Route 65, Warsaw to Lincoln
- Building new interchange at Route 71/TT north of Nevada
- Building alternating passing lines on Route 37 south of Monett
- Building interchange at Route 43 Main Street) and Zora Street, Joplin
- Converting to Diverging Diamond Interchange at Range Line Road and I-44, Joplin
- Rehabilitating Route 39/Table Rock Lake bridge, Shell Knob
- Building 16 Safe & Sound bridge projects, including 6 bridges in Henry County
- Many miles of resurfacing, chip seals and cold mix partial overlays

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1 Angela Eden

2 Gary McLarry

3 Angela Eden

4 Bob Edwards

5 Bob Edwards

6 Bob Edwards

Southwest District at Work

Among district workers helping with Feb. 29 tornado cleanup along state roads in Taney County are:

1. Branson Senior Maintenance Worker Shawn Nilges, tossing debris into a dump truck at Route 65/76 in Branson.

2. District Maintenance Engineer Michael Middleton, cutting up downed trees on Route VV near Powersite.

3. Springfield Maintenance Crew Leader Randy Patterson, driving a street sweeper along Branson's Route 76 strip.

MoDOT crews also cleared roads where tornadoes or high winds hit in several other areas that day, including Dallas, Stone and Barry counties.

4. Checking sign stands for a statewide Work Zone Awareness video is Monett Maintenance Supervisor Bryan Ozbun.

5. Republic Maintenance Crew Leader Ron Plaster reviews a video clip of his interview for the statewide Work Zone Awareness campaign with Central Office Community Relations Specialist Jack Wang.

6. In a community briefing in Clinton, Clinton Senior Construction Technician Dwayne Severs, left, previews for County Commissioner Jim Talley the Safe & Sound bridge projects coming up this year in Henry County.

Southeast District

2012 'No MOre Trash!' Bash Cleans Cluttered Roadways

Did you know it takes a plastic milk jug one million years to decompose? The Missouri departments of Transportation and Conservation are well aware and have been working to decrease the amount of litter throughout Missouri. To help educate individuals throughout the area, they are inviting schools, organizations and individuals to get involved in the 2012 No MOre Trash Bash!

"The Bash is a volunteer effort to help cleanup Missouri and work toward a litter-free state," said Shelly Cauldwell, Adopt-a-Highway Coordinator. "Picking up litter is a great way to make a difference in the appearance of the state, as well as take care of the environment."

In 2011, thousands of Missouri volunteers picked up 157,681 bags of trash and many also attended educational events throughout the month of April. The 2011 Bash was one of the most successful ever, but you can help make the 2012 Bash even better.

The SE district wants to thank those who are already pitching in and cleaning up their communities and public spaces. Some tips to keep in mind to raise awareness of No MOre Trash! during April, include:

- pick up litter
- educate others about litter
- conduct a litter-free activity
- encourage friends and family to participate

Dedicated volunteers help the Missouri departments of Transportation and Conservation decrease litter throughout the state.

For those who participate in the 2012 Bash and report their April activity by May 15, each team member who helped cleanup Missouri roadways will receive a No MOre Trash! Bash 2012 lapel pin.

They will also be entered in a drawing to win a No MOre Trash! Prize Pack! To learn more, please contact Cauldwell at (417) 469-6205 or 1-888-ASK-MoDOT (275-6636 . Additional information is also available at: *http://extra.mdc.mo.gov/nomoretrash/.*

Work Zone Awareness Week April 23-27

Get Involved & Help Spread the Word!

March 20 marked the first official day of spring, and motorists will soon begin seeing progress as construction season kicks into high gear. But with this progress comes more work zones! In an effort to remind drivers, as well as MoDOT crews and contractors, about the importance of work zone safety, the Southeast district is preparing for National Work Zone Awareness Week April 23-27. To celebrate this week, the Southeast has plans to get people throughout the district involved in a number of activities.

"Work zone awareness week is an effort to remind drivers of the importance of slowing down and paying attention in work zones, but it is also a great opportunity for us to get feedback about our work zones before kicking off another construction season," said Customer Relations Manager Nicole Thieret.

This year, the SE District is asking the public to grade MoDOT's work zones within the 25-county region. A "work zone report card" will be available on the SE website, facebook and twitter during NWZAW. Participants will be asked to grade MoDOT's work zones in key areas.

The SE District also encourages people to participate in the "Where in the District is Barrel Bob?" game. Barrel Bob is a 10-foot-tall man made of orange construction barrels. Throughout the week, he will appear in various locations in the Southeast region. Photos of Bob will be posted on facebook and twitter, and participants will be asked to guess his whereabouts.

Similar to last year, the Southeast District will ask individuals to help spread the word about work zone safety by sporting orange. This year, the district will hold an "Orange Out" day on Wednesday, April 25. Residents across the region are encouraged to participate by wearing orange and submitting photos for the Work Zone Awareness Wall of Fame. If you have a photo you would like to share, please send it to us at modot.southeast@gmail.com.

The final component of the celebration will be a public service announcement focused on the dangers of unsafe driving.

To get involved, visit *www.modot.org/southeast* and click on the facebook or twitter icons at the top of the page. If you already follow the Southeast District on facebook or twitter, continue to check those pages for upcoming announcements about NWZAW. Information about this year's work zone safety celebration will also be available at *http://www.modot.org/southeast/talkin_transportation/workzonesafety.htm.*

Check the Southeast District website at www.modot.org/southeast during NWZAW to get involved!

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Cooper Family Thanks SE District for Generosity

On the morning of Feb. 20, Senior Maintenance Worker Dustin Cooper and his family lost their home in Summerville due to a fire. Dustin and his wife Misti have four children; 9-year-old Eli, 7-year-old Jonah, nearly 4-year-old Sadie and 6-month-old Henry. Smoke detectors woke Dustin, and the family made it to safety.

Dustin's Thank You Note from March 8: My family and I would like to say thank you to all my MoDOT family. I believe I work with the greatest bunch of people on the planet. We have been overwhelmed with kindness, prayers, clothing and financial gifts. I don't know a lot of you who gave, but wanted to tell you that you are in my prayers. We are currently staying with my wife's sister and her family and are planning on moving into a rental house this weekend. Words cannot express how much God has blessed my family and me. He woke us up in time to get everyone out and that is the only thing we could not replace. We serve an awesome God who is worthy to be praised! Once again, thank you and God bless each of you.

Sincerely,
Dustin Cooper
Willow Springs Signing/Striping

Connections

The mission of *Connections* is to be a monthly source of Missouri Department of Transportation news and feature articles that connect employees statewide. It is distributed to MoDOT employees and retirees.

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Additional copies are available upon request. Suggestions, questions and comments are always welcome.

Please share this publication and recycle it after reading.

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Our mission is to provide a world-class transportation experience that delights our customers and promotes a prosperous Missouri.

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Firefighters Protecting Precious Cargo

by Pamela Hoelscher

The Jefferson City Fire Department recently hosted six child passenger safety (CPS) courses that resulted in sixty-eight firefighters becoming CPS certified! Sponsored by MoDOT's Traffic & Highway Safety Division, these classes were held in January and February at the Jefferson City Fire Department Training Center.

Instructors for the classes repeatedly commented about how impressed they were with the dedication and enthusiasm displayed by the participants throughout the classes. The firefighters are to be commended for their commitment to this program and their unselfish service.

Over the past several years MoDOT has supported CPS certification courses for fire department personnel, police departments, health departments, hospitals, and various other agencies throughout the state.

Special thanks to Chief Bob Rennick for his willingness to bring the National Child Passenger Safety Training course to Jefferson City firefighters. Chief Rennick fully supported the classes and even completed the course himself to become CPS certified. Chief Rennick was very flexible and willingly worked with instructors to ensure the participants obtained the required classroom time.

MoDOT looks forward to partnering with the Jefferson City Fire Department in the future as we work together to attain the common goal of protecting precious cargo, our children, as they travel on our roads and highways.

Congratulations to all of the newly certified firefighters.

Chief Rennick receives his CPS Certificate from Lead Instructor Kathy Zents.

Training instructors with Chief Rennick. From left to right: Lt. John Hotz -MSHP, Kathy Zents-Safety & Health Council, CPT Joe Schilling-Kirksville Fire Dept, Pam Hoelscher-MoDOT State CPS Coordinator, Chief Robert Rennick-Jefferson City Fire Department, and Officer Kendra Cooper--Lee's Summit Police Department.

Look Before You Book

There's more to consider than price and convenience when buying a ticket or hiring a bus company for your group's travel. A new SaferBus free app from the USDOT lets you check bus companies' safety records before you book a trip.

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration developed the app to give consumers easy access to 24 months of safety performance data for companies they might hire. The app provides the carriers' performance information based on unsafe driving, fatigued driving, driver fitness, controlled substance/alcohol and vehicle maintenance violations. The higher the percentage in any category, the higher the potential safety risk.

Another indicator, FMCSA safety ratings are also accessible through the app. The top rating is Satisfactory. Bus companies with a Conditional rating may pose a higher safety risk, and companies with an Unsatisfactory rating should NOT be operating.

Keep your field trips, fun runs and vacations safe. Visit *www.fmcsa.dot.gov/saferbus* before booking a bus.